



EVALUATING POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS

FACILITATOR GUIDE

SESSION OVERVIEW

This 45-minute session explores decision-making regarding post-secondary education. This session is intended for delivery in concert with Time to Choose... a post-secondary education program, an Alberta Employment and Immigration publication. This session is suggested as a follow-up to career planning / occupational inventory exercises so that students' ideas reflecting future work are current.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to identify terms used in post-secondary training.
2. Students will be able to relate the typical characteristics of post-secondary training to specific institutions.
3. Students will be able to identify their wants and needs regarding post-secondary institutions and relate these to specific post-secondary institutions.
4. Students will be able to identify practical and up to date resources for research related to post-secondary institutions.

MATERIALS

Hand Out 1 – What's the Difference?

Hand Out 2 – Making the Perfect Match – Do You Know the Difference?

Hand Out 3 – Characteristics of Institutions (Five Pages)

Hand Out 4 – Personal Profile

Hand Out 5 – Research Methods

Time to Choose. . . a post-secondary education program, Alberta Employment and Immigration



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OVERVIEW AND TIMELINES

Introduction – What’s the Difference?	5 Minutes
The Perfect Match	10 Minutes
Characteristics of Institutions	10 Minutes
Scoring	5 Minutes
Wrap Up – Resources / <u>Time to Choose...</u>	15 Minutes

ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION – WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

Distribute **What’s The Difference? Hand Out** to students. Quickly review the definitions, drawing information from the group; have students refer to the hand out. Allow time to request and respond to any questions, comments or concerns.

THE PERFECT MATCH

Break students into pairs; distribute **Making the Perfect Match Hand Out**. Instruct students to match each definition with the appropriate type of institution; provide correct responses from FACILITATOR’S GUIDE.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INSTITUTIONS

Have students return to the large group. Distribute **Characteristics of Institutions Hand Out**. Outline exercise - students will select the options that best describe their ideal educational setting, then indicate how important that characteristic is to them by choosing “Very Important, Moderately Important or Not Important.”

Have students select the top 10 characteristics from their “Very Important” choices. Indicate to students that the next (and most important) step is to do research.



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SCORING

Break students into pairs; distribute **Personal Profile Hand Out**.

Have students transfer their top 10 characteristics of institutions to the **Personal Profile Hand Out**.

Instruct students to brainstorm with their partner to generate at least two methods of researching for each of the characteristics.

Monitor students' top 10 ranks. If several choices within a category fall within the top 10, remark that the student must heavily research those aspects of the institution in order to best meet their needs.

WRAP UP – RESOURCES / TIME TO CHOOSE...

Have group members identify the various research methods they have generated. Top up by distributing **Research Methods Hand Out**.

Distribute Time To Choose. . .a post secondary education program, Alberta Employment and Immigration, as supplies permit and point out the valuable checklist of resources for Alberta's post-secondary institutions.



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MAKING THE PERFECT MATCH – FACILITATOR’S GUIDE

Answer Key 1 – F, 2 – G, 3 – A, 4 – B, 5 – C, 6 – E, 7 – D

Alberta Vocational Colleges

- Offer programs to help students upgrade their current levels of education up to grade 12, and obtain work-related skills they need for the current labour market
- Programs are specialized and are created at the request of industry for particular types of work and usually last one year or less

Private Colleges

- May offer university-level degrees in a religious setting

Private Vocational Schools

- Privately owned and operated schools offering a variety of short diploma or certificate programs (one to two years) providing job specific training
- Often focus on one sector (technology or administration)
- Many provide work-search support to graduating students
- Funded entirely through student tuition (no government funding)

Public Colleges

- Offer a broad range of degree and diploma programs including general interest, high school upgrading, career training and university transfer programs
- Diplomas take one to two years; degrees take three to four years
- Some focus on specific industries
- Not as large as universities and offer smaller classes and a more close-knit learning environment

Schools of Fine Arts

- Offer specialized and professional-level instruction in art, music, drama and dance; these schools attract artists, musicians, dramatists and dancers of international acclaim as lecturers
- Programs vary in length from four-year degree programs to six-week summer sessions

Technical Institutions

- Offer a variety of one-year certificate, two-year diploma programs and four-year applied degrees in the trades and technology fields and coordinate most apprentice programs in Alberta
- Work closely with business community to tailor programs to meet labour market demands

Universities

- Offer a wide range of traditional undergraduate and graduate degrees through various departments and faculties including liberal arts, fine arts, sciences, social sciences and professional programs
- Student populations range from 3 000 to 25 000 students



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Apprenticeship / Journeyman (e.g., Carpentry, Machinist, Millwright)

- Individuals complete periods of formal instruction as well as specified number of hours of on-the-job training in a particular trade in which the individual enters into a training agreement with an employer in the specific trade in which the employer is responsible to teach the trade to the applicant, admission usually requires specific grade and subject requirements
- Training results in Alberta Journeyman Certification and can lead to Interprovincial Red Seal Certification examination recognized in all provinces

Bachelor's Degree (e.g., Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Science)

- Generally involves three to five years of full-time study at a university or accredited college
- Admission usually requires a high school diploma with specific grade and subject requirements for different programs - faculties with limited enrollment may have stricter requirements

Calendar

- Published by institutions outlining detailed admission requirements, programs, as well as diploma, certificate and degree requirements, course descriptions, regulations, policy and procedures
- Scholarship and bursary information may be included as well as residence and housing information, extra-curricular activities, campus details, nearby attractions and contact information
- Some calendars may include photographs and maps

Certificate (e.g., Massage Therapist, Personal Care Aide)

- Certificate programs usually involve one year or less of full time, practically-oriented study at a college, technical institute or vocational college and may be in preparation for specific employment

Diploma (e.g., Rehabilitation Practitioner, Visual Arts)

- Diploma programs usually involve two years of full time study at a college or technical institute, often in preparation for employment at a technical level in specific fields
- Admission typically requires high school graduation with specific grade and subject requirements

Major / Minor

- Major - the academic subject or discipline selected as the area of concentration in a program
- Minor - academic subject or discipline selected as a secondary degree of interest

Transfer Programs

- Transfer programs are one- or two-year programs offered by institutions with approved programs allowing a student to take part of a university program at a college or technical institution before transferring to the appropriate university to complete - transfer students must qualify for admission to the university programs they wish to complete
 - Not all courses are transferable and not all universities recognize the same courses – it is important to carefully research the transferability of each course and confirm it with the receiving college or university
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MAKING THE PERFECT MATCH – DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

1. Alberta Vocational Colleges	A	Privately owned and operated schools offering a variety of short diploma or certificate programs (one to two years) providing job specific training Often focus on one sector (technology or administration) Many provide work-search support to graduating students Funded entirely through student tuition (no government funding)
2. Private Colleges	B	Offer a broad range of degree and diploma programs including general interest, high school upgrading, career training and university transfer programs Diplomas take one to two years; degrees take three to four years Some focus on specific industries Not as large as universities and therefore offer smaller classes and a closer-knit learning environment
3. Private Vocational Schools	C	Offer specialized and professional-level instruction in art, music, drama and dance; these schools attract artists, musicians, dramatists and dancers of international acclaim as teachers and guest lecturers Programs vary in length from four-year degree programs to six-week summer sessions
4. Public Colleges	D	Offer a wide range of traditional undergraduate and graduate degrees through various departments and faculties including liberal arts, fine arts, sciences, social sciences and professional programs Student populations range from 3 000 to 25 000 students
5. Schools of Fine Arts	E	Offer a variety of one-year certificate, two-year diploma programs and four-year applied degrees in the trades and technology fields Coordinate most apprenticeship programs in Alberta Work closely with business community to tailor programs to meet labour market demands
6. Technical Institutions	F	Offer programs to help students upgrade their current levels of education up to grade 12 and obtain work-related skills they need for the current labour market Programs are specialized and are created at the request of industry for particular types of work and usually last one year or less
7. Universities	G	May offer university-level degrees in a religious setting



CHARACTERISTICS OF INSTITUTIONS

Adapted from “The Road Ahead”, HRDC

Complete the following exercise; select the answer or answers that best reflect your needs and wants about your education. As you complete each question, take time to decide on the level of importance of each question to your specific circumstances.

Circle your choice of Very Important, Moderately Important or Not Important.

School	Level of Importance
I am interested in	
A. traditional, classroom-based learning	
B. distance or correspondence learning	
C. on-line learning	
D. a combination of the above	Very Moderately Not
My finances for school include	
A. student loans	
B. part- or full-time work	
C. support from family	
D. summer employment savings	
E. scholarships	Very Moderately Not
My schedule will be	
A. full-time school	
B. part-time school and part-time work	
C. study year-round with no breaks (faster)	
D. study in semesters with breaks	
E. work slowly, one course at a time	Very Moderately Not
I am prepared for a program of	
A. less than one year	
B. one to two years	
C. two to four years	
D. over four years	Very Moderately Not
I'd like to be in a place that offers	
A. lots of activities and a busy atmosphere	
B. areas to safely exercise run or bicycle	
C. a casual atmosphere	
D. a business-like atmosphere	Very Moderately Not

**Study Plans****Level of Importance**

I am pursuing further education to

- A. achieve specific career plans
- B. explore career possibilities
- C. study areas of interest to me
- D. increase my social life

Very Moderately Not

For my time and energy, I expect to

- A. be better informed and educated
- B. hold a recognized credential
- C. be trained for specific work
- D. increase my general employability skills
- E. increase my entrepreneurial skills

Very Moderately Not

I have already

- A. learned about work in my field of study
- B. determined a career path for myself
- C. discovered on-site and distance learning
- E. checked out loans and scholarships
- F. decided how long I can be out of work

Very Moderately Not

I have academic pre-requisites for

- A. a vocational program
- B. a private vocational school
- C. a public college
- D. a technical institution
- E. a public university

Very Moderately Not

Learning Options**Level of Importance**

To learn, I prefer to

- A. read a book
- B. listen to a lecture or presentation
- C. discuss concepts with a group
- D. experiment in a real-world situation
- E. use on-line, multimedia exercises

Very Moderately Not

I will need access to

- A. a top-quality library
- B. a computer and printer, access to the Internet
- C. well-equipped science labs
- D. a well-equipped gymnasium

Very Moderately Not

**Living Conditions****Level of Importance**

I would like to live

- A. on-campus, in dormitories
- B. off-campus, in an apartment alone
- C. off-campus, in an apartment or house
- D. in a room and board situation
- E. with my own family

Very Moderately Not

It is important for me to live

- A. in the heart of the city
- B. in the suburbs
- C. in the country

Very Moderately Not

When it comes to meals, I like to

- A. purchase groceries and prepare my own meals
- B. purchase meals in cafeterias or restaurants
- C. purchase meal programs on campus

Very Moderately Not

I would like to be able to participate in

- A. arts, sports, politics or recreational clubs
- B. sports, debating or skills competitions
- C. my existing social networks and clubs
- D. new connections and try new activities

Very Moderately Not

Student Services**Level of Importance**

I will require

- A. reliable child-care services
- B. services related to a disability
- C. special healthcare services
- D. financial support services

Very Moderately Not

For support, I will need help from

- A. academic counselors to select courses
- B. career counselors to choose programs and find work
- C. personal counselors to help with problems

Very Moderately Not

I may need access to

- A. assistance with study skills
- B. assistance with writing skills
- C. assistance with exam skills

Very Moderately Not



I want to have

- A. a student orientation program
- B. a student representative
- C. a harassment officer
- D. an active student union or council
- E. mentors to help with day to day issues

Very Moderately Not

Community

Level of Importance

It is important to me to

- A. live close to my family and friends
- B. experience a new community
- C. experience a new country

Very Moderately Not

I am interested in living

- A. where I currently live
- B. in another city within my province
- C. in another city, anywhere in Canada
- D. outside of the country

Very Moderately Not

I prefer to live

- A. in a large city
- B. in a small city
- C. out in the country

Very Moderately Not

The community where I live must

- A. have theatres, libraries and galleries
- B. have sports events and facilities
- C. have a variety of outdoor pursuits

Very Moderately Not

Environment

Level of Importance

I would prefer a student population

- A. that is large (over 10 000)
- B. that is medium sized (5 000 to 10 000)
- C. that is smaller (less than 5 000)

Very Moderately Not

I prefer an institution that offers

- A. only specific types of programs
- B. a broad range of programs
- C. all levels of post-secondary training

Very Moderately Not



I would prefer an institution that is

- A. new, with a reputation for innovation
- B. older with character
- C. no frills with a solid reputation
- D. a teaching focus
- E. an academic, research focus

Very Moderately Not

I like classroom sizes that are

- A. small, interactive classes
- B. mid-sized classes, labs and lectures
- C. large, impersonal lecture-hall classes

Very Moderately Not

I want to meet students who are

- A. the same gender, age and culture
- B. different gender, age and culture

Very Moderately Not

I would prefer an institution that is

- A. a public college or university
- B. a business or technical training school
- C. linked to social / religious organizations

Very Moderately Not

Of the options ranking “very important or moderately important” to you, select your top 10, and transfer those characteristics to the Personal Profile Hand Out. For example, if a well-equipped gymnasium was very important to you, transfer it to the score sheet for further investigation.



PERSONAL PROFILE

Transfer your top 10 characteristics of institutions to the first column of this sheet. Then, brainstorm two research methods that will help you find out more information about those characteristics.

	Characteristic	Research Method 1	Research Method 2
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			



RESEARCH METHODS

- **Guidance Counselor** – interview your school counselor for information and career planning tools
- **Post-secondary Academic Advisor** – individuals within the post-secondary institutions who provide current information about programs, transferability, start dates and entrance requirements. Prepare questions that are important to you!
- **Career Consultant or Labour Market Information Centre in a Canada Alberta Service Centre** – wealth of information regarding institutions, labour market trends, occupational information, financing
- **College Fairs and Open Houses** – visit and get a real feel for the atmosphere and resources by taking a tour of the institution, take notes, the guide could offer a lot of valuable material in a hurry
- **Visit in Person, Independently** – take your time (on a busy day at the institution) to check out the gym, cafeteria, bookstore, library and dormitories. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and look over the whole campus. Think about parking, resources in the nearby community, as well as public transportation
- **Calendars and View Books** – these marketing and information packages can give you information about programs, and selection, as well as community resources, many are available on-line!
- **Family** – talk to family members about the experiences they had at their post-secondary institution
- **Telephone Book / Community Directory** – have a look at the information specific to your community
- **Graduate Profiles, Placement Surveys** – statistics about labour market placement of graduates - read carefully, and get assistance from an advisor in interpreting them
- **Prior Graduates** – interview graduates of the school or the program to get a feel for the quality of their experience, as well as the response from the employment community
- **Drop-out Rate, Loan Default Rate** – if students are prone to dropping out of a program, or are often unable to repay loans, that may be a red flag for you
- **Employers** – the best source for future employability information, interview about the programs that they prefer, and which graduates they recruit a great contact for after you graduate!
- **Student Resources / Services Office** – get information about resources for students such as events, organizations and groups that you may want to join, make sure to ask about student programs
- **Campus Newspapers or Radio** – take a moment to read, or listen to the media of the institution, it may give you some valuable insight
- **Canadian Association for Co-operative Education** – 416.483.3311 or co-opted@indirect.com
- **Career Information Hotline** – 1.800.661.3753
- **The Education and Training Planner** – Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry publication
- **YouthLink** – Human Resources Development Canada
- **Spectrum** (Western, Eastern Ontario) 99 Series; Guidance Centre; North York, Ontario, 1999

Websites: www.

- **alis.alberta.ca** – links to several outstanding information sites, including on-line applications and loans information
- **schoolfinder.com** – links to major post-secondary institutions across Canada
- **tradesecrets.org** – Alberta Apprenticeship Industry Training
- **canlearn.ca** – user-friendly website offering creative links to career and educational information
- **youth.gc.ca** – federal website with great information and links
- **hoyle.com/distance.htm** – international links to distance education sources